

Microsoft announces a classroom-friendly version of Minecraft

Making learning fun again

By **Chan Khee Hoon** - Jan 19, 2016

Don't underestimate the power of the humble, 3D textured cube in *Minecraft*; more than just a resource for building houses, it has given many gamers the means to build sprawling worlds and go on exhaustive adventures, such as a [Lord of the Rings mod](#) that allows you to explore the beautiful Minas Tirith, and a [Half Life mod](#) to help you pretend that you are playing *Half Life 3* because it is never going to happen. To put it simply, it is a game that had sparked an incredible amount of imagination.

Microsoft had long been advocating the use of *Minecraft* as an educational tool to help nurture students' creativity as well as [introduce them to STEM subjects](#). In fact, *Minecraft* developer, Mojang, had just created a short [online tutorial](#) based on the game to teach young children the fundamentals of coding. With that, the company has taken another step to cementing the game's position as a classroom mainstay with its acquisition of *MinecraftEdu*—a *Minecraft* mod customised for use in schools—and developing an expanded version of this mod called *Minecraft: Education Edition*.

The main difference between the *Education Edition* and the boring ol' vanilla edition is that this new version will include additional features that can make the game much more classroom-friendly. Some of these features are enhanced maps that allow teachers and students to traverse the world together, an in-game camera that allows students to take a snapshot of their progress, a simpler way to import and export worlds, and a multiplayer mode that allows teachers to invite up to 40 students to participate in the game together.

"One of the reasons Minecraft fits so well in the classroom is because it's a common, creative playground," said Vu Bui, COO of Mojang. *"We've seen that Minecraft transcends the differences in teaching and learning styles and education systems around the world. It's an open space where people can come together and build a lesson around nearly anything."*

Minecraft: Education Edition will be available as a free trial this summer, while current *MinecraftEdu* customers can still continue to use *MinecraftEdu* and get the *Education Edition* free for one year upon its launch.